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STATE FOR AF/W  
TREASURY FOR DPETERS, RHALL, RABDULRAZAK  
STATE PASS USAID FOR NFREEMAN, GBERTOLIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/07/2027

TAGS: KDEM PGOV PHUM NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: ADEDIBU LOSES GROUND

Classified By: Consul General Donna Blair for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Signs point to the slow decline of Lamidi Adedibu's influence in Oyo State politics. His recent court appearance in Abuja and struggles with NAFDAC show his weakened position. Traditional ruler Gbola Adesiyan says Adedibu's "godson" Governor Adebayo Akala anticipates that the tribunal will overturn his election, and is hiring cronies and siphoning off funds from the state. End Summary.

'ADEDIBU'S LEGS ARE SHAKING'

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¶12. (C) Oyo State "godfather" Lamidi Adedibu's recent arrest and reprimand by a specially-convened Abuja court illustrates his steady decline and, perhaps, the beginning of the end of the godfather era in Oyo State, Prince Gbola Adesiyan, a traditional ruler said in a meeting with PolOffs. The Inspector General of Police requested a meeting with Adedibu in Abuja to discuss his role in creating instability in the Oyo State capital of Ibadan. Judges in Abuja were on recess. As a result, the Chief Justice convened a special panel, according to Adesiyan. Adedibu was asked by the judge to sign a statement of non-interference concerning not only himself but also anyone who works for him, promising not to interfere in Oyo State politics or to foment dissent. "Adedibu's legs are shaking," the Prince commented.

NAFDAC TAKES ON ADEDIBU

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¶13. (C) Adedibu's weakened position is also clear in his recent power struggle with the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC). Adedibu has also been linked to stolen NAFDAC registration numbers required on all food and pharmaceutical product labels, which he uses to disguise counterfeit products, said Adesiyan. NAFDAC shut down a food warehouse owned by a crony of Adedibu, Prince Adesiyan claimed, as part of its campaign to rid Oyo State of counterfeiters. Adedibu sent men to reopen the warehouse, and harangued the head of NAFDAC, Dora Akunyili. Akunyili threatened to sue Adedibu for defamation of character, accused him of interfering with NAFDAC, and said the Oyo State NAFDAC office would be shut down if she did not receive more cooperation from Oyo State officials, many under Adedibu's influence. Former President Obasanjo, in Ibadan for a funeral, paid a visit to Adedibu and told him to apologize to Akunyili, echoing what Adedibu's own lawyer had also instructed him to do, stated Prince Adesiyan.

TRADITIONAL LEADER: "GOVERNOR IS MESSING UP OYO STATE"

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¶4. (C) Current Oyo State Governor Akala, a "godson" of Adedibu, believes the tribunal will rule against him, Adesiyan said. To make governing difficult for his successor, and to feather his own nest, Akala is padding the civil service with his cronies, looting the public treasury, and generally "messing up Oyo State," said Adesiyan. The people of Oyo State are angry but are willing to wait for the tribunal to rule.

TRIBUNAL TRUE TO PEOPLE'S TRUST

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¶5. (C) Despite rumored attempts to bribe tribunal members, they have held fast to their mission and still have the trust of the population, says Adesiyan. A judgment is expected before Christmas, because the judge doesn't want to have to return to Oyo after the holidays, Adesiyan claimed.

¶6. (C) Comment: Prince Adesiyan is well connected, with a relative employed by the state election tribunal and friend and family throughout the Southwest. End Comment.

¶7. (U) This cable has been coordinated with Embassy Abuja.  
BLAIR